

S.A.I.L.

State Action Information Letter

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Report from the Director

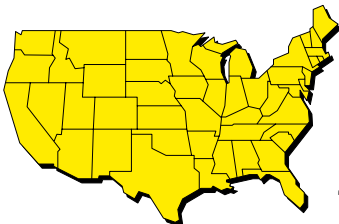
Communications technology has made it so much easier for all of us to stay in touch to respond to local or national emergencies or threats to public health and to keep up-to-date with news and information. The Division of Federal-State Relations has been working hard to expand both our ability to reach you and your ability to reach us. Our latest effort has just come to fruition. The DFSR *Directory of State and Local Officials 2000 Edition* is now available on the Internet. This site has all updated state listings. You can browse individually by state, and download the entire directory for printing. Paper copies will no longer be available. To access the site, use http://www.fda.gov/ora/fed_state/directorytable.htm.

Of course, the information in the directory is only as good as what you provide us and we intend to work hard to keep it updated. So, if you have personnel changes, changes in area codes and phone numbers, or addresses, please contact Carl Vassar with pen and ink changes by FAX at (301) 443-2143 or by e-mail at cvassar@ora.fda.gov.

Keep in touch!

Richard Barnes
Director, Division of Federal-State Relations

Reports from the States



Texas lawsuit settled – John Cornyn, Texas Attorney General, announced that JLT Beverages and Dr. Pepper Bottling Company of Texas have agreed to pay \$500,000 to the State of Texas to settle allegations that the company was manufacturing bottled water under unsanitary conditions.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of the Texas Department of Health (TDH) for manufacturing adulterated and contaminated products; failing to recall all contaminated products; failure to disclose the source of the water and the name of the manufacturer on the label; and failure to perform required bacteriological testing of the water.

The terms of the settlement require the companies to maintain records of sanitation for all food and beverage manufacturing, proper labeling and bacteriological testing. The AG has been informed that the companies now have a recall strategy in place that will remove any unsafe product from the marketplace. Contact: Dan Sowards, TDH, Telephone (512) 719-0243 or Dan.Sowards@tdh.state.tx.us.

California develops training video – The California Department of Health Services, Food and Drug Branch and FDA, CFSAN, in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, university

researchers, and industry representatives, have developed an educational video to assist sprout producers in producing a safer product. The video is useful for retailers, regulators, and anyone working with the industry that wants to better understand sprout production and current recommendations for best production practices.

Areas covered in the video include sprout specific food safety concerns, GAPs and GMPs, seed treatment, and microbial testing. This is the first in a series of food safety training programs developed jointly by CDHS-FDB and FDA-CFSAN. Copies will be available through the CDHS-FDB and CFSAN web sites. Later this month, a workgroup will meet to begin developing a script for a video on fresh-cut produce. In addition, CDHS-FDB and FDA have begun developing materials for upcoming training for the juice industry. For further information, contact Ingeborg Small at Ismall@dhs.ca.gov.

California sponsors GMP workshops – In April, the California Department of Health Services, Food and Drug Branch (FDB), in cooperation with FDA, held two one day workshops titled "Sanitation and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) Training Course in Spanish". The courses were offered in Irvine and Oakland. The one-day course was given completely in Spanish and was specifically designed for food handlers, food processing line workers, sanitation/plant hygiene supervisors, QA/QC personnel, and production managers/supervisors needing assistance in complying with FDA's Food GMP regulation (21 CFR Part 110). Those in attendance were extremely pleased with the course. The topics covered in the course included:

- Introduction to Agencies, Jurisdiction and Laws
- Basic Microbiology and Pathogens of Public Health Concern
- Good Manufacturing Practices
- Introduction to HACCP
- General Issues on Sanitation
- Key Points of Sanitation
- Introduction to Insects, Birds, and Rodents in Food
- Sanitizing/Bio Films
- Implementation of Sanitation and GMPs

For more information, contact James M. Waddell at Telephone: (916) 324-3990, FAX (916) 322-6326, or email at jwaddell@dhs.ca.gov.

Idaho coordinates Tri-State Food Safety Grant - Sandy McCurdy of the University of Idaho organized a tri-state (Idaho, Washington and Oregon) action plan that included three state universities and the Cooperative Extension System. The 406 Food Safety Grant is sponsored by the USDA and will educate the home food handler for high-risk and hard-to-reach consumers. This will be accomplished through five media:

(1) Spanish Language Radio Spots -Target: Food safety messages to Hispanic audiences in the summer months and September (National Food Safety Month). Method: Plan to produce 4 to 5 different radio messages, perhaps in a drama format, and air on at least five Spanish language radio stations per state.

(2) Interactive Web Site with Food Safety Information for Hard to Reach Rural Audiences -Target: Rural populations with Internet access. Also, pregnant women who need specific food safety and personal hygiene (e.g. handling cat litter) information. Method: An interactive web site will be developed and publicized. A research component to measure impact will be developed.

(3) Germ City Interactive Handwashing Demonstration. Target: Families at county fairs and health fairs, children at school, children in pre-schools, families in WIC programs. Method: Experience with development and use of the exhibit exists in western Washington state. We would build additional units and support materials and expand use of the exhibit to eastern Washington, Oregon and Idaho. A research component to measure impact would be developed for this project.

(4) Food Safety Information Hotline. Target: Consumers in Washington, Oregon and Idaho during the summer months. Method: Oregon has conducted a toll-free number hot line for food safety questions for the past two summers. Washington will be piloting a food safety toll-free number this summer in one area of the state. Idaho would like to add this service in summer 2002. A publicity program for this service would be developed.

(5) Point of Purchase Information on Proper Cooking of Meats. Target: Consumers at the meat case in supermarkets. Method: Develop point of purchase information about the use of thermometers and proper endpoints in cooking meats. Encourage grocery stores to carry thermometers and stock them near the meat case. Work with state beef councils on this. This would be developed in year two of the project. A research component to measure impact would be developed for this project.

By reaching home kitchens to educate for high-risk and hard-to-reach audiences, this will meet President Clinton's Food Safety Initiative. This will be a three-year program starting October 2000. These five specific projects were chosen because they could be accomplished over three years. Each program would be carried out in each state, but not necessarily at the same level of intensity in each state.

For more information contact: Frank Isenberg, Telephone: (208) 334-5947, Fax (208) 334-6581 or E-mail: isenberg@idhw.state.id.us or Sandy McCurdy, PhD, Telephone: (208) 885-6972, Fax: (208) 885-5751 or E-mail: smccurdy@uidaho.

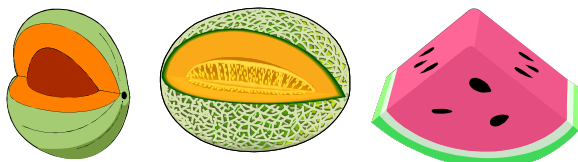
Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals - The Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals has hired a new Training Officer. Jane Colacecchi-Padilla joined the Department in January 2000. Jane graduated from the University of Southern California with a degree in Biology. Her responsibilities for the Department include grant writing, working on developing training programs, educating food service workers and monitoring continued education for inspectors throughout the state.

In addition to a new Training Officer the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals will be hiring three new Environmental Specialists after July 1, 2000. In order to be in compliance with the 1997 Food Code, which was adopted and became effective in 1999, two inspections per year, or a risk based inspection program is required for food establishments. Therefore the General Assembly allocated funds for three new food inspectors for the Food and Consumer Safety Bureau to initiate a risk based inspection program at the state level.

Beginning in July, the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals food inspectors will be able to enter their inspection reports directly into a new Restaurant Inspections Database. The new system will allow for greater documentation of restaurant inspections. Prior to the establishment of the new computer system, all records pertaining to restaurant inspections were entered into the state's mainframe system. While the mainframe system was good for storing massive amounts of data, it was not user-friendly. The greatest advantage of the new Restaurant Inspection Program is the ability to statistically track almost all aspects of a restaurant's operation - including the issuance of a license, compliance history, complaints, inspector's notes, and investigation of foodborne illnesses. In addition, the program will track inspector training, territories, and inspection statistics.

Melon Update:

Safe Handling Practices for Melons



In recent years there have been several foodborne outbreaks associated with melons. The most recent outbreak (April/May 2000) was due to *Salmonella* poona and was associated with cantaloupe consumption

in 7 western states (California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Washington) and British Columbia, Canada. A total of 43 illnesses have been reported. Other outbreaks which have occurred in recent years are:

- 1998 - Salmonella Oranienburg, 22 cases in Ontario, Canada due to cantaloupe consumption
- 1997 - Salmonella Saphra, 24 cases in California due to cantaloupe consumption
- 1991 - Salmonella Javiana, 26 cases in Michigan due to watermelon consumption
- 1991 - Salmonella Poona, 400 cases in 23 states and Canada due to cantaloupe consumption
- 1990 - Salmonella Chester, 245 cases in 30 states due to cantaloupe consumption

In response to the outbreaks, the produce industry instituted a Melon Quality Program.

In 1991, FDA provided guidance to the retail and food service industries that outlined safe handling practices. That guidance has now been updated to be consistent with the FDA Food Code. It reinforces the fact that following some simple guidelines will help keep fruit fresh as well as safe.

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before cutting melons.
- Before cutting, wash the outer surface of the melon thoroughly with cool tap water to remove surface dirt.
- Wash all food-contact equipment and utensils that contact cut melons (cutting boards, knives, etc.) thoroughly with hot soapy water, rinse, sanitize, and air-dry.
- Use a barrier such as gloves, deli paper, or an appropriate utensil to touch cut melons. Do not touch cut melons with bare hands.
- Maintain the temperature of cut melons at 41° F or below. Cut melons should be displayed in a refrigerated case, not just displayed on top of ice. Uncut melons do not need to be refrigerated.
- Date mark cut melons that are held more than 24 hours to indicate that they must be consumed or discarded within 7 days.
- Mark the time when cut melons are displayed without refrigeration. Cut melons may be displayed for a maximum of 4 hours without temperature control, and, if not eaten, must be thrown away at the end of 4 hours.

Specific procedures for storing or displaying melons, for washing hands, date marking, and for washing and sanitizing equipment can be found in the FDA Food Code.

Contact person: For more information, contact Jeanette Lyon, Retail Food and Interstate Travel Team, at (202) 205-5558 or by e-mail at jlyon@cfsan.fda.gov.